THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMALA SINHA): (a) to (c) The third round of the resumed Foreign Secretary level talks between India and Pakistan, held in New Delhi from 15—18 September, 1997, was adjourned, with the two sides deciding to reconvene at mutually convenient dates. No dates have been fixed for the reconvened meeting of the Foreign Secretaries.

At their meeting in Islamabad in June 1997, the Foreign Secretaries identified eight subjects, viz (a) Peace and Security, including CBMs; (b) Jammu and Kashmir; (c) Siachen; (d) Tulbul Navigation Project; (e) Sir Creek; (f) Terrorism and drug trafficking; (g) Economic and Commercial Cooperation; (h) Promotion of friendly exchanges in various fields; for discussions between the two countries. They had also decided that a mechanism would be set up to address these issues in an integrated manner and that the Foreign Secretaries would directly address the issues of Peace & Security including CBMs and Jammu & Kashmir, and coordinate and monitor discussions on other identified subjects. The Foreign Secretaries would continue their discussions on these modalities of the dialogue when they meet next.

Dialogue between the two countries, at the highest political level, has resumed with the two Prime Ministers meeting in may, September and October 1997, which is significant in itself. During these meetings, our desire to establish a relationship to trust, friendship and cooperation was reiterated, while at the same time, our serious concern regarding Pakistani activities which impinge adversely on our security and national interest was conveyed.

The hotline communication between the two Prime Ministers has been revived. Fishermen in the custody of the two countries have been released, and the remaining, as soon identified, would also be released. To Promote people-to-people contacts and encourage interaction between academicians, journalists, schemes, businessmen of the two countries, a number of steps have been taken by us to liberalise the visa regime.

During the discussions with Pakistan,f we have conveyed our desire to develop a wide-ranging mutually beneficial relationship covering economic, trade, cultural, people-to-people contact and other functional areas.

Demands made by Global Organisation of people of Indian origin

940. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a press conference held by the Global Organisation of People of Indian Origin at New Delhi on August 31, 1997 in which the Organisation called upon Government to give them official recognition as it was done in China and to help them reverse the brain drain;

(b) if so, what were the main observations and demands made by them; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto and the decision taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMALA SINHA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main demands made by the GOPIO are:

(i) that the Government should give them official recognition;

(ii) that the Government should organise an international conference for their benefit;

(iii) that the Government should start a center for overseas Indians in New Delhi;

(c) Globally there are a number of organisations of overseas Indians.

The Government does not grant exclusive recognition to any single organisation. An open and constructive dialogue is maintained, largely through Indian missions abroad, with a wide-range of NRI organisations.

The Government supports seminars, conferences, etc. for NRIs and PIOs both in India and abroad on a continuous basis. The problems of NRIs and PIOs were reviewed at a series of recent high level meetings in the Government with a view to enabling people of Indian origin to have better access to India and minimise hindrances in their participation in investment in India in areas such as real estate, housing, industry, etc. The Government has set up the office of Commissioner for NRIs for collecting and disseminating information on incentive schemes for NRIs and PIOs in this regard. Besides this, there is an Overseas Indians Cell in the Ministry of External Affairs which looks after the other requirements of NRIs.

Settlement of Compensation Claims of Indian Workers in Iraq

941. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to refer to the answer to unstarred Question 1712 given in the Rajya Sabha on 7th August, 1997 and state:

(a) the details of the compensation claims of Indian workers in Iraq settled as on date under various categories; category-wise;

(b) whether the claim numbers Q/KSC/534891 have since been settled;

(c) if so, the details in this regard; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMALA SINHA): (a) The details of compensation claims approved by the United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC) are as follows:

(i) 'A' claims, i.e., claims payable to those who fled from Kuwait/Iraq in the wake of Iraqi invasion of Kuwait but prior to March, 1991—102, 154.

(ii) 'B' claims, i.e., claims for death/injury—183

(iii) 'C' claims, i.e., claims for loss of property upto $100,000—21,371.

(iv) 'D' claims,i.e., claims in excess of $100,000—Nil

(v) 'E' claims, i.e., Corporate claims—Nil

(vi) 'F' claims, i.e., Government claims—Nil

Of these claims, moneys were transferred for partial settlement of 18,818 'A' claims @US$2,500/- per claim in March, 1997 and payments against them are presently being made through designated banks. The balance compensation would be paid on receipt of additional funds from the UNCC. Compensation for settlement of 183 'B' claims was transferred in early 1998 and it has been almost fully disbursed by the designated banks, excluding a small number of claimants who could not be traced. Money, for partial settlement of 5,749 'C' claims, amounting to US$14,126,281.87, was remitted by the UNCC last month and is in the process of being paid to eligible claimants through designated banks.

(b) to (d) Claim No. Q/SKC/534891 was used on GOI forms which were initially supplied to claimants in 1991 in order to apply for compensation. The UNCC decided in 1992 that all claims for compensation needed to be submitted on separate forms issued by it. The earlier applications on GOI forms carrying No. Q/SKC/534891 were therefore deemed to be invalid.

Bilateral agreement with UAE for transfer of criminals

942. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a dialogue is going on with UAE for entering into a bilateral agreement for transfer of criminals of the respective countries on reciprocal basis;